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ABSTRACT

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A local vapor fuel cell, comprising (A) an anode receiving a liquid fuel from a liquid fuel source substantially through diffusion; (B) an electrolyte plate having a first surface adjacent to the anode; and (C) a cathode adjacent to a second surface of the electrolyte plate and opposite to the anode. The anode is provided with a heating environment to at least partially vaporize the liquid fuel inside the anode and the anode further comprises a catalyst phase to ionize the fuel in a vapor or vapor-liquid mixture form to produce protons. The electro-catalytic reaction at the anode is more efficient with a vapor phase or vapor-liquid mixture than with liquid fuel alone.

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The invented fuel cell is compact in size and light in weight and, hence, is particularly useful for powering small microelectronic devices such as a notebook computer, a personal digital assistant, a mobile phone, and a digital camera.